

Polynesia in Review: Issues and Events,

1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018

Reviews of American Sāmoa, Hawai‘i, Sāmoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Wallis and Futuna are not included in this issue.

COOK ISLANDS

This review covers the two-year period from July 2016 to June 2018 and tracks a range of ongoing and emerging concerns. Featured here are the implications from the 2016 population census, Marae Moana (the national marine park), the Cook Islands’ impending Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) graduation to high-income country status, a controversial local tax amnesty, and events connected with the 2018 general election.

2016 saw the five-year national population survey get underway. Preliminary results of the 2016 census, which was held on 1 December, recorded a total population of 17,459 (MFEM 2018c). Including residents and nonresidents (mostly tourists), the count shows a 2 percent decrease from the 2011 census (MFEM 2018c). However, official reporting on population trends was delayed, as technical problems with equipment meant that the data had to be sent to New Zealand for compilation. Nevertheless, it is expected that the census data will show a further population drop, especially on the Pa ‘enua (outer islands), where development economist Vaine Wichman pointed out that island leaders and public health workers “have a fairly good handle on the ebb and

inflow of people to the islands” (CIN, 1 June 2017), so are able to anticipate changes and demands for services and resources. However, eighteen months on, the official details of people’s mobility in and out of the country, economic activity, housing, and well-being are still not available. On the face of it, it would seem that timely and informed public policymaking, planning, and service provisions will be impacted. But to some extent this is not necessarily a bad thing, because population-related policies need to be informed by more than just demographic trends, which invariably can be used to support the taken-for-granted arguments typically associated with the vulnerabilities and questionable viability of small island state development and economies (Baldacchino and Bertram 2009).

Depopulation is a national concern and a political football (CIN, 31 May 2018), especially given its implications for the country’s labor force and its ability to support the tourism industry. However, it is important to also take account of the cultural and social imperatives that play a part in people’s mobility, aspirations, and experiences, which may help deepen understandings when interpreting population patterns and trends. For example, the cost of living and the ability to earn a living wage were the main concerns of the 2018 *Minimum Wage Rate Review Report* (Government of the Cook Islands 2018). The review panel agreed that the Cook Islands Census

2016 and 2016 Household Income Expenditure Survey would serve as the analytical basis for setting the minimum wage, along with a labor market assessment. However, in the absence of these major data sets, the panel concentrated on reviewing any major changes since the previous report in 2017. The review panel considered that “the main employers of minimum wage employees were the public sector, small businesses and the few businesses in the Pa Enua” (Government of the Cook Islands 2018, 3). As such, island administrations were likely to respond to an increase in minimum wage by reducing the work hours of minimum wage staff, assuming that there was no increase in the Pa ‘enua funding model to help meet the new rate (Government of the Cook Islands 2018, 4). So while their take home pay would not change, workers would have more time for other activities, including subsistence farming and fishing. Regardless, the cost of living remains relatively high due to the country’s small population, the reliance on imports to meet local consumption needs, and the distances that imported goods must travel, causing transport costs to affect the price of goods (Government of the Cook Islands 2018, 7).

Another aspect of the Cook Islands population to consider is the increasing number of tourists to the Cook Islands. The environmental and social sustainability of the country is now being put to the test with record high numbers of tourists reaching over 150,000 in 2017 (RNZ 2017a). Titika-veka Member of Parliament (MP) Sel Napa pointed out that “we should be safeguarding the very things that

make us a place that tourists want to visit, cramming as many tourists on to Rarotonga isn’t the way to go” (RNZ 2017b). Despite the launch of the Cook Islands Sustainable Tourism Development Framework and Goals in October 2016, which set some direction for attending to the numerous tourism issues, Napa contended that without upgrading existing infrastructure and utilities, such as the roads, water, power, and sewerage and waste disposal facilities, it would be difficult to sustain the increasing number of visitors. Furthermore, demands on human resources, public services, and accommodation capacity are increasing, as are the impacts on the lagoon environment. Of these concerns, Prime Minister Henry Puna said, “our elders gave birth to this industry but clearly, the future is in the hands of those growing up within it” (CIN, 13 Oct 2017). In this regard, urgency is needed in meeting these demands, which may include making use of donor partners and aid.

Increasingly, ocean matters are of political and public concern. In July 2017, the Marae Moana legislation to protect and conserve the Cook Islands’ marine environment came into effect. It established a multiple-use marine park covering the country’s entire economic exclusion zone of 1.9 million square kilometers (Burton 2017). After five years of consultation and planning with island communities and various interest groups, Marae Moana is now governed by a national council, which is chaired by Prime Minister Puna. Current, related activities include undertaking marine spatial mapping, which is an important aspect of governing certain activities such as

fishing, seabed mining, ocean exploration, and sustainable tourism activities. Marine protected areas around each island have been extended to fifty nautical miles, designating an area in which large-scale fishing and seabed mining activities are prohibited (*CIN*, 6 Feb 2018). As the world's largest marine protected area, Marae Moana also contributes to the Pacific Oceanscape project, of which the Cook Islands is one signatory among twenty-three other Pacific Island states and territories.

As ocean custodians, the Cook Islands' governance and protection of our waters is also a key part of the indigenous renaissance of the vaka moana (double-hulled voyaging canoe). The Cook Islands Voyaging Society has drawn on traditional knowledge of vaka akonoanga (vaka culture) to campaign alongside other Oceanic peoples, calling for the environmental protection of the ocean and speaking out against climate change, pollution, and unsustainable fishing operations.

However, the Cook Islands Voyaging Society suffered a setback when its vaka moana Marumaru Atua was damaged by fire in September 2017, requiring a complete rebuild (*CIN*, 17 Sept 2017). Funds toward the rebuild were offered from various local and overseas supporters, helping to establish the value of the Marumaru Atua as a learning institution of vaka culture and an icon of environmental sustainability. This was eventually recognized by the government; Cook Islands Minister of Finance Mark Brown announced a NZ\$255,000 (NZ\$100,000 = US\$65,227) contribution toward the cost of the

NZ\$320,000 rebuild, establishing the vaka's status as a national treasure. The Cook Islands Voyaging Society aims to have "mama vaka" back in the water in 2019 to continue the legacy of traditional sailing and navigation and ocean protection (*CIN*, 3 Feb 2018).

In response to being owed over NZ\$33 million of back taxes, in 2017 the Cook Islands Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) put in place a tax amnesty. For a five-month period, all Cook Islands taxpayers were given an opportunity to clear tax debts or disclose evaded taxes without fear of prosecution. The amnesty allowed all additional taxes, such as late payment penalties and turnover taxes, to be written off (MFEM 2017b).

News of the tax amnesty was part of Prime Minister Puna's Christmas message to the nation in December 2016. However, a law change was required because the law at the time only allowed a specific government official, designated as the Collector of Taxes, the power to make individual tax write-off decisions on a case-by-case basis (*CIN*, 12 Jan 2017). The move was supported by both sides of the House, and the amnesty got underway in August 2017.

The amnesty was later extended to the end of March 2018. During that time, Minister of Finance Mark Brown announced that the government decided to write off all outstanding tax prior to 1 January 2010 as part of the amnesty. Worth NZ\$18 million, the intention behind the amnesty was to ease the burden on people and businesses as well as to enable the tax office to focus on the NZ\$14 million

debt, which had been accruing since 2010 (RCI, 2 Feb 2018). This was welcome news for those employees and businesses with tax debts. According to public accountant Mike Carr, for those taxpayers who were up-to-date or had cleared their tax debts, the news was less welcoming (*CIN*, 19 Feb 2018). This raised questions about the equity of law enforcement and the influence of politicians and business people on our tax administration (*CIN*, 19 Feb 2018).

An ongoing matter that reemerged during this period of review was the Cook Islands' impending graduation to and reclassification as a developed country by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Following the country's continued strong economic growth (MFEM 2017a), this reclassification would mean that the Cook Islands would also graduate to high-income status. This is a disincentive for OECD donor countries to provide concessional loans and grants to the Cook Islands. Under the OECD's Development Advisory Committee (DAC) rules, financial assistance from donor partners will not count toward the official development assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

In October 2017, the OECD confirmed the controversial graduation had been delayed due to insufficient supporting data. In his analysis of the possible implications of graduation, Dr Geoff Bertram argued that the OECD's use of a country's gross national income (GNI) to determine their income status is problematic because it is something that small economies such as the Cook Islands

do not calculate (Bertram 2016).

Instead, the OECD was using GDP as a proxy to GNI "to determine the graduation status, which is wrong," said MFEM Financial Secretary Garth Henderson (*CIN*, 2 Oct 2017). The OECD's DAC took the unusual step of granting the Cook Islands an extension to the end of 2018 to sort out its GNI data. Whether or not graduation takes place sooner rather than later, successfully managing the reclassification to a high-income developed country will require transitional arrangements to be put in place, including restructuring existing financial arrangements (Wyeth 2017).

To this end, restructuring such arrangements will likely include changes to taxation. Bertram offered some key considerations, such as raising the country's company tax rate, which is currently low (Bertram 2016, i). This is problematic because of self-imposed tax percentage thresholds adopted as part of its financial management arrangements.

Furthermore, Bertram suggested that one way to "free up resources for the financially stressed education, health and social impact sectors" would be to stop or privatize the NZ\$12 million annual subsidy that the government pays to Air New Zealand (Bertram 2016, ii). Bertram argued that, should the subsidy continue, "a case can be made for having it paid for by the private tourism sector which is the direct beneficiary" (Bertram 2016, ii). Bertram also identified "an unidentified outflow of up to [NZ]\$100 million per year from the economy, which "is likely the after-tax private-sector profits and land rents retained offshore rather than invested

back into the Cook Islands economy” (Bertram 2016, i). It would seem that Bertram’s suggestion of “capturing a greater share of this surplus” could be achieved by dropping the airline subsidy (Bertram 2016, i).

Related to the tax threshold mentioned earlier, Bertram proposed addressing the lingering effects of the Cook Islands’ “1998 austerity package agreed with its creditors New Zealand, Nauru, and the Asian Development Bank” (Bertram 2018, 44). At a meeting in Manila in 1998, this “cold-turkey cure” (Bertram 2018, 56) for the country’s fiscal excesses of the 1980s and 1990s involved imposing fiscal measures “in exchange for the writing-off of half of its [the Cook Islands’] debt” (Bertram 2018, 57). These measures stipulated that “public sector wages and salaries should be capped at 44 per cent of total revenue, falling to 40 per cent over time; debt servicing should not exceed 5 per cent of total revenue; the overall budget deficit should not exceed 2 per cent of GDP; and net debt should not exceed 35 per cent of GDP” (Bertram 2018, 57). In addition, one fiscal measure considered the most “serious . . . draconian . . . [and] straight from the hard core of the neoliberal austerity playbook” (Bertram 2018, 58–59) was that tax revenue should not exceed 25 percent of GDP (Bertram 2018, 57). What has resulted is a situation in which the shortfall in meeting the costs of sustainable tourism infrastructure development over the medium-term is met through increasing external aid, primarily because the fiscal ratios cap the government’s ability to raise revenue through taxation and borrowing. Thus, one of the

challenges in the graduation transition will be to find ways to deal with the lingering effects of the twenty-year-old Manila agreement.

Continuing on the theme of the Cook Islands’ relationship with New Zealand, in March 2018 the Labour Party–led coalition government arrived in the Cook Islands at the end of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern’s Pacific tour. Prime Minister Ardern announced that changes would be made regarding Cook Islanders’ eligibility for the New Zealand Superannuation Fund. Making good on its promises to amend existing entitlement restrictions, Cook Islanders who have worked in New Zealand for over twenty years will no longer have to reside in New Zealand for five years from the age of fifty to qualify for the New Zealand Superannuation. This is considered good news, as it means that these individuals will be able to remain in the Cook Islands and continue to contribute to the local economy without further exacerbating existing demands on the labor force by leaving for a period of time (CIN, 14 March 2018; RNZ 2018c).

The review period concluded with the 2018 general election, which was held on 14 June with approximately 8,000 of 10,917 eligible people voting (MFEM 2018b; RNZ 2018d). The final count showed that the Democratic Party won 11 of the 24 seats, just one more seat than the Cook Islands Party’s (CIP) 10 seats. The One Cook Islands Party won 1 seat, with 2 seats going to Independent candidates. However, despite not winning the majority of the votes, it was the CIP that formed a majority government with the two Indepen-

dents and One Cook Islands Party. This gave them a majority of 13–11. The offer of ministerial positions and a reshuffle of portfolios saw first-time candidate for Tongareva (Penrhyn) Robert Tapaitau, Atiu candidate for the Teenui-Mapumai constituency Vainetutai Rose Toki-Brown, and the One Cook Islands Party candidate and former Cook Islands Party MP for Tupapa-Maraerenga on Rarotonga George Maggie Angene form the Cook Islands Party–led government. Of course, the space for such offers came about when Rarotonga-based Teariki Heather, the minister for infrastructure, Kiriau Turepu, the minister for agriculture, and Minister for Health Nandi Glassie lost their seats on Election Day.

A caretaker coalition government is now in place and awaiting the results of six petitions lodged following the election. It is expected that judicial decisions will be completed by September 2018. If successful, the Cook Islands Party–led government will continue to govern for a third consecutive term.

Despite winning the majority of votes in this election, the Democratic Party must surely be contemplating just what went wrong. For the second time in a row, they obtained more votes than the Cook Islands Party but failed to form a government. When Tina Browne, a prominent lawyer and Democratic Party leader, failed to cross the line to win the Rakahanga constituency, it must have been an outcome they could have done without, as it weakened their ability to negotiate a possible coalition arrangement.

All of the political parties touted

electoral reform as an issue to be addressed if elected. Voter distribution and constituency size has long been a political conundrum, with neither of the two major parties making moves to revisit the twenty-four-seat configuration while in power over the last twenty years. Apart from abolishing the overseas seat and reducing the electoral term from five to four years, little else has happened. Prime Minister Puna confirmed that he would back moves for political reform if reelected for a third term (RNZ 2018b). However, if his previous two terms are anything to go by, such moves seem unlikely without concerted public pressure.

Of note during this election were the ambitions, gains, and losses of the women candidates making up 12 of the 52 candidates. This is an increase of 5 from the 7 who stood in the 2014 election (CIN, 3 May 2018; MFEM 2018a). The Democratic Party loss of first-time candidate Tina Browne was certainly a blow after she had secured the confidence of the party to lead them into the election.

Despite Browne's loss, Te-Hani Brown's upset win over seasoned politician Norman George and CIP incumbent Nandi Glassie can be seen as a significant flower in the young candidate's *ei katu* (flower crown). Under the Democratic Party flag, she is at twenty-two years old set to become the youngest MP in the country and region. Cook Islands Youth Council President Sieni Tiraa said "If anything, this shows a strong call for change . . . most of all, we hope that Te-Hani will use this position of responsibility to empower the rest of our young Cook Island-

ers, and to stand for something new” (CIN, 18 June 2018).

Brown and her mother Rose Toki-Brown’s successful wins of both Atiu seats is also another first: a mother and daughter clean sweep. As reported in the last review (Newport 2017), Toki-Brown was originally elected as a CIP candidate in 2014 before crossing the floor in 2016 to become the first female opposition leader.

However, in June 2017 she quit the opposition coalition when William “Smiley” Heather was confirmed as the Democratic Party’s leader. This saw Toki-Brown return to the CIP camp to contest the 2018 election. Yet, the move was short-lived with Toki-Brown again jumping out of the CIP vaka. She ran as an Independent because she had been made to feel unwelcome and untrustworthy by the CIP (CIN, 15 June 2018). On winning her electorate, Toki-Brown subsequently rejoined the CIP government, this time as a cabinet minister responsible for health, justice, and agriculture (RNZ 2018a). With mother and daughter now holding political power in Atiu, whether justified or not, all eyes will be watching to see if the flip-flopping between parties continues.

Overall, the two years under review were the third and fourth year of the current government term. As such, the pressure has been on the government and political leaders to deliver on their promises and produce benefits for its citizens. Despite the political to-ing and fro-ing, it seems the Cook Islands Party-led government has managed to do enough to stay in power. However, with promises of political reform and tax increases a possibility, it remains

to be seen just what changes will take place over the next twelve-month review period.

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FRENCH POLYNESIA

The most important events during the year under review were the territorial elections of late April and early May 2018, in which Édouard Fritch, after essentially ruling as a usurper for the last four years, was able to consolidate his power as the country’s new strongman by receiving a democratic mandate. Besides the elections, the period

remained relatively calm and without major upheavals. While the tourism economy seems to be slowly recovering, two controversial economic mega-projects remain hotly debated. On the international level, French defiance of UN resolutions on the territory appears to continue unabated under the Macron administration.

The review period began with a new boost of international acknowledgment for the country, and by extension the Pacific region at large, when on 9 July the Executive Council of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), at a meeting in Krakow, Poland, declared Marae Taputapuātea, a historical temple complex on the island of Raiatea, a World Heritage Site. For several years, cultural organizations on Raiatea as well as several local politicians had been campaigning for the temple's listing, and with their lobbying the nomination of the site slowly progressed. For the final decision, both the President of French Polynesia Édouard Fritch and the mayor of the Taputapuātea municipality on Raiatea, Thomas Moutame, traveled to Krakow to be present at the historic occasion (*TI*, 9 July 2017).

Marae Taputapuātea is an outstanding example of Polynesian megalithic architecture, with walls made out of coral stone slabs of a height of up to 3.5 meters each. The temple complex also has a regional importance that transcends today's political boundaries, as it was one of the most important spiritual and cultural centers of Eastern Polynesia during the centuries before European contact, with oral histories and temple names in other parts of French Polynesia, the

Cook Islands, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Hawai'i referring to the site.

The inscription of Taputapuātea as a World Heritage Site marks what is so far the highest level of increasing institutional recognition of traditional Polynesian culture and spirituality. While Christian influence had for about two centuries obscured and denigrated many aspects of that culture, it is increasingly coming back in full force (Saura 2009). During the review period, one of the leading figures in the contemporary spiritual revival movement, Sunny Moanāura Walker—who unapologetically identifies as a “pagan”—gained widespread recognition when a known local author published a biography about him (Ariirau 2017).

A more problematic aspect of Taputapuātea's world heritage listing, however, is that as long as the country remains a French dependency, UNESCO considers France, not the country government, as the state party responsible for the site. In consequence, Taputapuātea is now listed as a “French” heritage site on UNESCO's website alongside such monuments as the Cathedral of Reims and the Palace of Versailles (UNESCO 2018), reinforcing France's colonial claim over the site rather than identifying it as a pan-Polynesian monument.

Meanwhile, the country's unresolved decolonization continued to be hotly debated within other UN agencies. During the annual hearings before the UN Decolonization Committee in New York at the beginning of October, the political status of French Polynesia was once again a subject of contention. President Fritch testified repeatedly that his country

was fulfilling all of the conditions of a self-governing country and should therefore be removed from the list of territories to be decolonized. However, since the country government actually only has administrative but no sovereign powers, which remain France's exclusive prerogatives, the president earned little recognition. Accordingly, the Overseas Territories Review blog stated that Fritch's statements were nothing more than "Colonial Accommodationist Antics" (OTR, 4 Oct 2017). The fifteen other representatives of French Polynesia who testified at the hearing all agreed and condemned their president and France's refusal to cooperate with the UN decolonization agencies (OTR, 4 Oct 2017; RNZ, 6 Oct 2017).

In late November, this assessment received additional confirmation when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Lausanne, Switzerland, responded to a request for subsidies to the local Olympic Committee of French Polynesia. The IOC stated that, unless French Polynesia becomes an independent state, its local committee would not be recognized by Lausanne, and the country could only participate in international sporting events through affiliation with France's IOC membership (TI, 30 Nov 2017).

Similarly, most international experts agree that the premature granting of full membership in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) to French Polynesia and New Caledonia in 2016 has essentially given France two seats in the PIF, since foreign affairs is a French national prerogative, not one devolved to the country governments of either territory (Pareti 2017).

Any hopes that France's new

president, Emmanuel Macron, would finally bring a change in attitude from Paris were bitterly disappointed during the review period, as his administration's actions made it clear that there would be no turn in France's colonial policy.

Already Macron's predecessor François Hollande had disappointed many Polynesians, as he had promised in writing before his election to support the decolonization of the country and then did the exact opposite. Many hoped that Macron, who had labeled France's former colonial policy a "crime against humanity" during his election campaign, and who comes from a generation in which the decolonization of most other French overseas territories had already been completed before he was born, would make a turnaround in this regard (*Le Point*, 16 Feb 2017).

But in fact the Macron administration continued Hollande's scandalous disregard for international law as France was, for the fifth time in a row, reprimanded by the UN General Assembly for not transmitting information on French Polynesia to the UN Decolonization Committee. In stark contrast to New Caledonia, where France has been dutifully cooperating with the United Nations for years, French Polynesia continues to be the only one of the seventeen UN-recognized non-self-governing territories for which the administrative power is refusing to comply with article 71e of the UN charter by failing to forward information about the territory to the UN Decolonization Committee (United Nations 2017). Macron has thus turned out to be a hypocrite; under his leadership, France has

defended international legal instruments such as the Paris Agreement against the rogue attitude of Donald Trump's US administration, all while acting as a rogue state itself in regard to UN resolutions on decolonization.

Macron also continued the notorious tradition of interference in French Polynesia's domestic politics in favor of local pro-French forces when his party En Marche announced that it would officially support Édouard Fritch's party, Tapura Huiraatira, in the upcoming territorial elections (*Polynésie Première*, 23 Feb 2018).

This official endorsement from Paris only served to reinforce the appeal of Tapura Huiraatira to both voters worried about financial subsidies from France and local turncoat politicians looking to join whichever political party is in power. The party Tahoeraa Huiraatira—that of the doyen of local politics, eighty-seven-year-old former President Gaston Flosse—which had won a two-thirds majority of seats in the last elections in 2013, and from which Tapura had split off in 2015, was reduced to a small minority in the process. Already in June 2017, the Speaker of the Assembly Marcel Tuihani Jr and his father, former Tahoeraa party treasurer Marcel Tuihani Sr, resigned their Tahoeraa membership and became Independents due to differences with Flosse (*TI*, 6 June 2017). In September, Tahoeraa assembly member Gilda Vaiho-Faatoa followed in Tuihani's footsteps (*DT*, 4 Sept 2017). Just a few days later, Patricia Amaru and Juliette Nuupure also left Tahoeraa but, unlike the two Tuihanis mentioned above, went directly over to Tapura (*RNZ*, 13 Sept 2017). By the end of the term in

April 2018, Tapura held a supermajority of 33 out of 57 assembly seats, while Flosse's party retained only 12, with the rest consisting of 10 members for former president Oscar Temaru's pro-independence Union pour la Démocratie (UPLD, which had also earlier lost a member to Tapura) and the two Independents Vaiho-Faatoa and Tuihani Jr, who by then had formed a new political party, Te Ora Api no Porinetia.

In the run-up to the election, Temaru's pro-independence camp was further weakened, as UPLD, formed in 2004 as a larger umbrella organization including Temaru's Tavini Huiraatira and several smaller pro-independence or left-wing autonomist parties, fell apart. Tauhiti Nena, a former minister of sports, culture, and youth under Temaru who had already run under his own party label in his unsuccessful bid for a seat in the French National Assembly earlier in 2017, formed a new coalition of splinter groups, named E Reo Manahune, which included his own party Tau Hoturau and the local Green party Heiura-Les Verts, a former UPLD component. Another former UPLD member party, Here Aia, joined Gaston Flosse's Tahoeraa, and so did opportunistic former Mahina Mayor Emile Ver-naudon (whose now defunct Aia Api party had also been a component of UPLD) and even two prominent veteran Tavini members, Myron Mataoa and Tamara Bopp-Dupont (*TI*, 9 April, 13 April 2018). This left Tavini to run as a single party, but at the same time the departure of opportunists and turncoats provided it with an opportunity to showcase its "moral purity"; the party pledged that none of

its candidates had ever been accused of political corruption and would immediately resign from politics if such a case should occur, whereas both Tahoeraa and Tapura included many candidates against whom corruption trials were pending, including President Fritch (*TI*, 17 Nov 2017). At the same time, Tavini modernized its political and economic platform, not advocating independence as a revolutionary rupture but rather as the eventual outcome of a sustained decolonization process in cooperation with France and UN agencies (Tavini Huiraatira 2018).

On the other hand, Tahoeraa was certainly benefiting from the several defections from the pro-independence camp. Joined by several prominent labor union leaders, Flosse's new team gained the outlook of a party of nostalgics of an older political order—a party that feared Fritch's neoliberal reform program, much in line with that of Macron on the French national level. But Flosse's campaign was hampered by the fact that he himself was not allowed to run due to the conditions of a suspended prison sentence for corruption. In consequence, his longtime confidant Geffry Salmon acted as Tahoeraa's leading candidate instead, even though election posters still highlighted Flosse's face, counting on the veteran leader's unabated charisma. Additionally, Tahoeraa denounced the current French government as colonialist and advocated for a more substantial autonomy arrangement with France, presenting a draft bill to make French Polynesia into an "associated country" of France, somewhat similar to the Cook Islands' current relationship with New Zea-

land (Tahoeraa Huiraatira 2018b), a project attracting significant interest of voters with anticolonial and Tahitian nationalist convictions and thus providing competition to Tavini.

But despite sustained campaigns by both opposition parties, the election results were unequivocal in confirming Fritch's political ascendancy. Already in the first round of voting on 22 April, Tapura stood clearly ahead with 43.04 percent of the vote. Tahoeraa scored second with 29.40 percent, while Tavini only won third place at 20.72 percent. Tuihani's Te Ora Api o Porinetia gained 3.68 percent, while Nena's E Reo Manahune scored merely 2 percent. Still further off with only 1.15 percent was another splinter group: "Dignité Bonheur" led by French settler Jérôme Gasior, a local offshoot of the populist French party Union Populaire Républicaine (*DT*, 23 April 2018).

In the runoff on 6 May, contested between those party lists that achieved at least 12.5 percent in the first round, Tapura won 49.18 percent, Tahoeraa 27.72 percent, and Tavini 23.11 percent. The outcome of the preliminary round was thus largely confirmed, with Tapura winning most of the first-round votes of the splinter parties and Tavini also showing some slight gains. Voter turnout reached a historic low with only 61.51 percent in the first round and 66.82 percent in the second round (*DT*, 7 May 2018).

While the percentages alone created a clear majority, the allocation of seats in the state assembly was even more massively in favor of Tapura, since the electoral law grants the leading party list an automatic bonus of one-third of the seats beyond the proportional

distribution of the remaining two-thirds of seats. Hence, Tapura received a two-thirds majority of 38 seats in the 57-seat assembly, while Tahoeraa got only 11 (down from 38 seats at the last election in 2013) and Tavini gained only 8 seats (11 in 2013).

On 17 May, the new assembly convened for its inaugural meeting, and Tapura member Gaston Tong Sang (another former president of the country) was elected Speaker. Two days later, the assembly confirmed Fritch as president with a majority of 39 votes, while Salmon received 10 votes and Temaru 8 votes; one of the Tahoeraa members had already defected to Fritch's camp. In his inaugural speech, Fritch expressed a conciliatory attitude toward the opposition and invited all assembly members to work together for the development of the country (*TI*, 17 May 2018).

Similar to the defection of Tong Sang from Tahoeraa in 2007 and his subsequent election victory in 2008, the 2018 election results mark a new cycle in the country's ever-evolving political landscape. Just like Tong Sang, Fritch has taken most of the convinced pro-French forces within Tahoeraa with him, leaving Flosse himself and his hard core to move once more in the direction of independence. Tapura's votes hence account for almost the entire French settler population (estimated at 10–15 percent of total inhabitants) and all those locals who are concerned about a stable and secure flow of subsidies from Paris. But it remains an open question whether Fritch's party, with such pure pragmatism and lacking a long-term vision, will have a future beyond the current term. Similarly, it

is questionable whether Tahoeraa will maintain itself beyond the life of the charismatic “old lion” Flosse.

Temaru's Tavini clearly also suffered a massive electoral decline, not only because of the collapse of UPLD and defections to Tahoeraa but also because many voters see Temaru's presidencies in the mid-2000s as a great disappointment, since nothing concrete was done at that time to prepare for independence. Nevertheless, Temaru and his advisors have learned from many of their past mistakes and were careful not to succumb, as they did in 2008, to Flosse's anticolonial rhetoric and to form a coalition with the “old lion.” Flosse's proposal to form a common list of Tahoeraa and Tavini for the second round of the election, in order to be able to beat Fritch, was rejected by Tavini—an important step away from the tactics of power politics to moral integrity. As the only party with a clear long-term vision for the future, Tavini is clearly the party with the best chances of survival beyond the life of its founder.

Meanwhile, it cannot be denied that Fritch's prudent, pragmatic, and technocratic style of governance has yielded some positive economic results. Tourism, currently the only substantial industry in the private sector, has slowly picked up traction again as the number of visitors increased to 198,959 in 2017 (*TI*, 16 May 2018). But this is still less than at the height of the tourism boom in the 1990s and early 2000s, when there were far over 200,000 annual visitors (ISPF 2002).

Increasing tourism in order to stimulate economic growth and overcome dependency from French sub-

sities is the main motivation behind “Mahana Beach,” Gaston Flosse’s pet project envisioned during his last term in office from 2013 to 2014; it entails building a large resort area in Punaauia on Tahiti’s northwest coast, which would consist of various hotels (some of them high-rise) and shopping and entertainment facilities, akin to Waikīkī on O’ahu, Hawai’i, or Tumon on Guam. While the Fritch administration continues to support the project, it has been less enthusiastic than Flosse, who kept promoting it on the title page of Tahoeraa’s electoral program. The project remains controversial because of its potential environmental impact, the massive injection of foreign (most likely Chinese) capital needed to build the facilities, and the planned exemption of the construction site from the minimum wage and other social benefits for workers in order to make it attractive for those investors (Rival 2017: 340–341).

The second controversial economic “megaproject”—significantly more advanced in its planning than Mahana Beach—is the fish farm that is being built, also with Chinese capital, on the atoll of Hao in the Tuamotus. Praised as a “blue economy” project that would provide a new type of income for the country besides French subsidies and tourism, the project is also controversial because of environmental concerns. First, the raising of thousands of fish in basins filled with millions of liters of water might entail massive impacts on the ecosystem of the atoll’s lagoon (Rival 2017: 339–340). Second, the site of the farm, a former support base for French nuclear weapons testing on other nearby atolls, is already significantly

polluted both chemically and radioactively, leading to concerns about the quality of the fish produced at the facility (*TPM*, 17 May 2018).

Reflecting on both megaprojects, French researcher Aurélie Bayen saw a pattern of French Polynesian elites searching for new sources of financial support for their unsustainable levels of consumption, analogous to a “cargo cult” (Bayen 2017), with Chinese investments having supplanted the French military-industrial complex and its “manne nucléaire” (nuclear manna) during the period of nuclear testing from the 1960s to the 1990s. Flosse’s new idea to finance the Mahana Beach project by an Arab billionaire from Abu Dhabi could be seen in that same logic (Tahoeraa Huiraatira 2018a).

While the country is still figuring out how to develop a self-sufficient and sustainable economy, the future of the French colonial presence in the region is far from clear, as French policy often seems to lack well-articulated long-term objectives (Regnault 2017). At the same time, the inhabitants of the Marquesas Islands, who have never really felt comfortable being part of a Tahiti-centered political entity, are still searching for a meaningful status for their archipelago, either within or outside of the current political system (*TPM*, 20 April 2018). With the upcoming decolonization referendum in New Caledonia and its potential ramifications for Wallis and Futuna (MacLellan and Regan 2018: 1, 19), ripple effects toward the French-affiliated islands further east are not impossible in the near future.

During the review period, the country lost several leaders in the

political arena. On 29 August, former Papeete Mayor Louise Carlson (in office 1993–1995 and the only woman so far) passed away at age eighty-seven (TI, 30 Aug 2017). Another local politician, former Moorea Mayor Teriitepaiaatua Maihi, died on 24 October aged only sixty-three (TI, 24 Oct 2017). On 20 February, seventy-six-year-old businessman, Catholic church administrator, and politician Emmanuel Porlier, who was also a former assembly member, passed away in Paris (TI, 20 Feb 2018). Two days later, former assembly member for the Tuamotus and government minister Moehau Teriitahi, one of the “turncoats” who had been part of virtually every assembly majority during the political instability of the mid-2000s, died aged sixty-seven (TI, 22 Feb 2018). On 6 April, leader of the labor union O Oe To Oe Rima and longtime assembly member Ronald Terorotua, another turncoat politician instrumental in making and unmaking majorities, also passed away prematurely at age sixty-three (TNTV, 7 April 2018).

In the cultural realm, three personalities passed away at rather young age, including popular radio and TV journalist, composer, and comedian Mario Brothers on 2 December at age fifty-five (TI, 2 Dec 2017) and Wilson Mahuta, a musician, authority on traditional percussion, and jury member of the annual Heiva competition, on 4 January, also aged fifty-five (TI, 4 Jan 2018). Writer Patrick Araia Amaru, a novelist and playwright in the Tahitian language, joined the ancestors on 18 June at the age of sixty (TNTV, 18 June 2018). In contrast, Taaria Walker, known as

“Mama Pare”—an elder and cultural authority of her home island of Rurutu, author of an autobiography (Walker 1999), and mother of Moana Walker (mentioned above)—lived to the age of eighty-seven at her passing on 2 February (TI, 2 Feb 2018).

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LORENZ GONSCHOR

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MĀORI ISSUES

The 2017 general election delivered twenty-nine members of Parliament of Māori descent, twenty of whom are in government, with eight of those becoming ministers. Māori also featured in sporting successes, especially women's rugby and men's softball. At the same time, racism against Māori became more blatant as decisions to allow Māori to have their own representation in local government were all successfully overturned. Māori continue to be disproportionately impacted by the effects of poverty in stark contrast to the Pākehā (European) population, which enjoys relative affluence. That drew criticism

yet again from two United Nations treaty bodies as Māori continue to be denied our rights under both Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Since coming to power in late 2017, the new government has appeared to be more caring than the last, but little has changed for the large number of Māori struggling to survive in increasingly harsh socioeconomic conditions while still trying to protect our natural resources from overexploitation. Before reviewing these issues, we will pause to remember a number of leaders we lost during this period, all of whom spent their lives fighting to achieve justice for Māori.

Ngāi Tahu of Te Waipounamu (the South Island) lost some well-loved and widely respected elders and leaders. Trevor Howse passed away in May 2017. He helped organize and drive Ngāi Tahu's treaty claim behind the scenes, collating a vast amount of the information that was presented to the Waitangi Tribunal. He was also part of the Ngāi Tahu team that spearheaded the negotiation process and resulted in one of the biggest treaty claims settlements to date (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu 2014). So too was Kuao Langsbury, who passed away in October. He first took a leadership role in Ngāi Tahu in 1961 when he was elected the chair of Ōtākou Rūnanga at the age of twenty-five (Waatea News 2017a). Then in January 2018 it was the gentle elder, leader, and Māori language, culture, and history teacher Kukupa Tirikātene. He provided advice and support for Ngāi Tahu's leadership and contributed to the recovery of their dialect of the Māori language. Tirikātene came from a family of

long-serving members of Parliament. His father, Sir Eruera, his sister, Whetū (Tirikātene-Sullivan), and his nephew, Te Rino, have all served as members of Parliament for the Southern Māori or Te Tai Tonga electorate (Waatea News 2018b).

Artist, teacher, master carver, and heritage advocate Dr Cliff Whiting of Te Whānau a Apanui passed away in July 2017. He worked on a number of modern-day meetinghouses including the spectacular Te Hono ki Hawaiki on Rongomaraeroa Marae at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga at Palmerston North Teachers' College, Maru Kaitatea on Takahanga Marae in Kaikoura, and Tahu Pōtiki on Te Rau Aroha Marae in Bluff. He also undertook large-scale murals for a number of government buildings including the New Zealand MetService, the National Library of New Zealand, and the Christchurch High Court (Hunt 2017).

Strong, outspoken, yet gentle Māori rights advocate Nuki Aldridge of Ngāpuhi passed away in November 2017. His expertise and knowledge of northern history was legend, particularly that relating to the formation of the collective of leaders, Te Whakaminenga o Ngā Hapū o Nu Tirenī, who were responsible for the country's first constitutional document, the 1835 He Whakaputanga o te Rangati-ratanga o Nu Tirenī, or the declaration of hapū (grouping of extended families) sovereignty often referred to in English as the Declaration of Independence. Nuki was a key witness in the hearings of the Waitangi Tribunal on the mid-northern claims. The tribunal went on to issue in 2014 its

groundbreaking findings that Ngāpuhi did not cede sovereignty to the British when they signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840. New Zealand's constitutional arrangements and parliamentary institutions have all been built on the false assumption that Māori had ceded sovereignty.

Ngāpuhi also lost another dedicated Māori rights advocate, the highly respected broadcaster, Māori language expert, and Vietnam War veteran Kingi Taurua. He passed away in May 2018. Taurua was steeped in the history, traditions, and values of his ancestors and used his radio programs to bring them to the fore. His broadcasts of the discussions he held with other holders of such knowledge from around the country are greatly treasured. He was well known for challenging those he considered as not upholding the honor and integrity of their ancestors, and he had little regard for those who bullied the people. His patience and calm consistency often averted crises at Waitangi, especially during Waitangi Day commemorations.

Keita Walker of Ngāti Porou of the East Coast also passed away in May. She was a champion of Māori language and culture. After a long career in education, she joined the Waitangi Tribunal in 1993. She also sat on many tribal and land boards on the east coast, including chairing Radio Ngāti Porou (Waatea News 2018a).

Dr Koro Wetere of Ngāti Maniapoto passed away in June. He was the Labour member of Parliament for Western Māori from 1969 until 1996 and the minister of Māori Affairs from 1984 until 1990. He extended the mandate of the Waitangi Tribunal so

that it could hear claims dating back to 1840. He was a strong supporter of the Waikato-Tainui Kīngitanga and was influential in the 1995 settlement of Waikato's Tiriti o Waitangi claims (E-tangata 2018).

We bade each of these leaders and many others farewell over the past year as they commenced their journey to join their ancestors.

The results of the 2017 General Election included the usual mixture of wins and losses for Māori. The Māori Party had the biggest loss; none of its members returned to Parliament. They had made too many concessions in order to sit on the government benches with their National Party coalition partner, denying the very Māori treaty and human rights they had been elected to defend. In the lead-up to the elections, the Māori Party's minister of Māori Development had become increasingly embattled with his own constituents.

The election results indicated that no fewer than 29 members of Parliament of Māori descent are now in the House, spread across five parties: National, Labour, the Greens, New Zealand First, and ACT New Zealand. These members owe allegiance to their parties first, not to Māori. There are only 7 members (in a 120-seat Parliament) who are specifically mandated to represent Māori. However, even they must put their party's wishes ahead of the needs of their constituents. All 7 Māori seats went to Labour and resulted in 8 Māori becoming ministers. Voter turnout of 67 percent in the Māori seats continued to be much lower than the overall turnout of 80 percent (Electoral Commission 2018).

The new prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, presented a softer, more caring, and better-informed approach than that of previous governments when she visited Waitangi for the annual Waitangi Day commemorations in February. She acknowledged the 1835 basis for New Zealand's constitution, *He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni*, the Declaration of Māori Sovereignty. *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, the 1840 treaty between Māori and the British Crown, is derived from the declaration. All previous governments, in keeping with their colonizing agenda, have eschewed the declaration because it threatens the legitimacy of their constitutional arrangements. The prime minister made commitments to lift Māori out of poverty, create more jobs, reduce the high incarceration and youth suicide rates of Māori, and ensure that Māori have adequate housing (TVNZ 2018). Her comments followed on from Governor-General Patsy Reddy's comments at the opening of Parliament at the end of 2017 when she pointed out, "No one should have to beg for their next meal. No child should be experiencing poverty. That kind of inequality is degrading to us all" (New Zealand Government 2017). What Reddy did not mention was that it is Māori who disproportionately bear the burden of poverty in New Zealand and that the gap between Māori poverty and New Zealand European affluence is now a gulf. At the last count in 2015, the median wealth of New Zealand Europeans was NZ\$114,000, five times more than that of Māori at NZ\$23,000 (Stats NZ 2016).

Achieving desperately needed

improvement for Māori in all areas will not be straightforward. Some Pākehā who have derived great privilege and prosperity off the back of Māori poverty and deprivation are adamant that the status quo must be retained. They continue to fight to stop Māori recovering our rights and the resources they stole from us. None has been as blatantly racist as the group calling themselves Hobson's Pledge, led by a past leader of the National Party. In 2017 and 2018, they successfully campaigned and overturned the decisions of five city and district councils to have Māori represented on their councils. They exploited discriminatory legislation that allows council decisions relating to Māori membership of councils (but not other types of membership) to be overturned by a referendum. To do so, Hobson's Pledge used their extensive resources to organize large turnouts of their membership to vote against Māori becoming decision makers in local government (Hobson's Pledge 2017).

The Human Rights Commission received a number of complaints about the leaflets distributed by the group but was unable to take any action to prevent the behavior. The commission had earlier run a campaign against racism that was fronted by 2017 New Zealander of the Year and award-winning filmmaker, actor, and comedian Taika Waititi (Mutu 2018a, 176). He has been talking for many years now about how racist New Zealand is. In April, Waititi was reported in an English magazine as saying that New Zealand is "racist as fuck" (Cafolla 2018). It went unreported by New Zealand media for four days until Waititi

himself goaded them into reacting by noting their silence in a Twitter post. Predictably, racist elements in Pākehā media attacked him mercilessly, proving Waititi's point. But his message drew support from the race relations commissioner and the prime minister (Cafolla 2018), as well as from a number of other commentators.

Any hope that New Zealand might be moving away from its White supremacist foundations have been quickly squashed by the government's deeply racist and divisive treaty claims settlement process (Mutu 2018a, 178–180), which has continued to pit Māori against Māori over the past year. Divisions within Ngāpuhi, the country's largest iwi (nation) over the mandate have continued and are reported on frequently by the media (Mutu 2018a, 178–179). Like Ngāpuhi, Whakatāohea of Te Moana a Toi (the eastern Bay of Plenty) and Ngāti Wai of Northland went to the Waitangi Tribunal over their disputes arising from the government's mandating process. The tribunal found that for Whakatāohea there had been “a failure to fulfill the Crown's duty to act reasonably, honourably, and in good faith” and recommended that there be a temporary halt to negotiations until the issues identified in relation to the mandate could be addressed (Waitangi Tribunal 2018). For Ngāti Wai, they found that the body the Crown had recognized (the Ngātiwai Trust Board, which had been established to administer trust funds), was “not fit for purpose” to negotiate treaty settlements (Waitangi Tribunal 2017). Meanwhile, tensions have been high between a collective of Hauraki iwi and neighboring Tauranga Moana

iwi and Tāmaki Makaurau iwi after lands of the latter two were included in the settlement of the Hauraki iwi. Large numbers joined protest marches during 2017 and 2018 in an attempt to persuade the government to adhere to tikanga (Māori law), but they were largely ignored.

The new minister of Treaty of Waitangi negotiations indicated that he was prepared to discuss the problems associated with the treaty claims settlement policy with the National Iwi Chairs Forum. However, no discussions have eventuated. For nearly twenty-five years now, the policy has been controlled by government servants who have ensured adherence to its original intent—an intent that was determined unilaterally by the government in the early 1990s but is not widely known or understood (McDowell forthcoming; Mutu 2018b). Recent research has focused on government documentation that spells out the aim of successive governments' treaty claims settlement policy: it is not to “settle” claims but rather to remove Māori legal rights. That includes the legal rights won in the Court of Appeal in the 1980s to have governments relinquish lands that they stole and return control and ownership of those lands to the Māori from whom they stole them. The policy also aims to remove our human rights as spelled out in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly our right to self-determination (McDowell forthcoming; Mutu 2018b). Its overarching aim is to uphold the Doctrine of Discovery in New Zealand, a doctrine that falsely asserts that Whites are inher-

ently superior and therefore can take over the lands, lives, and resources of Indigenous peoples as and when they choose (Miller and others 2010; Mutu 2018b). Government servants are striving to meet these goals by a deadline of 2020. During the period under review the government legislated the extinguishment of the claims of five claimant groupings: Ngāti Pūkenga of Tauranga, Rangitāne of Wairarapa and Tāmaki Nui-a-Rua, Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa of the Far North, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga Tamatea of southern Hawke's Bay, and Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki of Auckland (Office of Treaty Settlements 2018).

The Doctrine of Discovery persists in the former British colonies of New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States of America to this day (Miller and others 2010). It has resulted in numerous atrocities being perpetrated against Māori in the same or very similar ways that the other three states have abused and mistreated the Indigenous peoples in the territories that they took over. Since the 1970s, New Zealand's persistence with this White supremacist approach has led Māori to call on the United Nations for support and assistance.

The United Nations has repeatedly criticized New Zealand for its treatment of Māori (Daes 1988; Stavenhagen 2006; Anaya 2011). During the period under review, two United Nations treaty bodies issued further criticisms and strongly worded recommendations for how to remedy the New Zealand government's unacceptable treatment of Māori. In August 2017, one of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimina-

tion was that the government "issue, without delay, a timetable for debating, in partnership with Maori, . . . the proposals contained in the report of Matike Mai Aotearoa" for constitutional transformation (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. 2017; see also Jackson and Mutu 2016). Predictably, nothing happened. Then in March 2018, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights held an interactive dialogue with the New Zealand government as part of New Zealand's periodic reporting. During the dialogue, committee members noted repeatedly that they were mystified that a developed and comparatively wealthy nation such as New Zealand has such appalling levels of socioeconomic deprivation, and especially among Māori. The committee's report was released in May (United Nations Economic and Social Council 2018) and strengthened the recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on constitutional transformation by recommending that the government "take immediate steps, in partnership with Māori representative institutions, to implement . . . the proposals put forward in the 2016 Matike Mai Aotearoa report" (Jackson and Mutu 2016). They also recommended that the government

- develop a national strategy to bring legislation and public policy in line with the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- put in place effective mechanisms to ensure meaningful participation of Māori in all decision-making processes affecting their rights;

- take effective measures to ensure compliance with the requirement of obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples, notably in the context of extractive and development activities.

There were also strong recommendations regarding family violence and child abuse, and adequate resourcing to address problems such as unemployment, poverty, housing and homelessness, health, and education as they impact Māori. A number of the recommendations reflected submissions made to the committee by the National Iwi Chairs Forum's Independent Monitoring Mechanism. The mechanism has been working through this and other United Nations treaty bodies and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in an attempt to shift the New Zealand government toward compliance with its international obligations regarding Māori.

Despite the worsening socio-economic situation of most Māori, we have continued to fight against excessive and unsustainable exploitation of our natural resources. Fresh water continues to pose major problems. Māori own the water but governments, including local governments, have usurped and then denied Māori ownership in order to retain the benefits for themselves. As a result, many rivers are now polluted and aquifers are coming under threat from freshwater bottling companies who pay nothing for the water they take and then sell overseas. In some rare cases, such as the Porotī springs in Northland, Māori have been legally recognized as the owners of water. But that has not stopped the local govern-

ment selling licenses to developers to take water that does not belong to them from the aquifer that supplies the springs for commercial bottling. The hapū (grouping of extended families) of Porotī have been reduced to protesting in the streets, most recently in September 2017, in order to stop their water being stolen and their springs being damaged (Radio New Zealand 2017).

Water-bottling consents are now a pressing issue not only at Porotī but also in Whakatāne, with Ngāti Awa appealing against resource consents that would allow a company to take water for bottling (More 2018). The Waikato Regional Council put on hold an application to take water for bottling from the Blue Springs near Putaruru after an objection from the Raukawa Settlement Trust (Waatea News 2017b). Ngāti Tama at the top of the South Island are continuing to pursue a water conservation order for their Waiporopupū springs after successfully appealing a consent to take water for bottling in 2017 (Hindmarsh 2018). Underlying the objections of Māori owners is the government's ongoing refusal to address the fact that Māori own the water, despite promises made to the Supreme Court in 2013 that it would do so.

In other areas of resource management, consents for sand mining in south Taranaki are awaiting the decision of the High Court on appeals from Ngāti Ruanui, Ngā Rauru, and various other groups (Stowell 2018). The members of a marae (communal meeting complex) in Northland are fighting to stop the largest poultry factory farm in the country being

built next to their cemetery (Earley and Lambly 2018). Hapū members from Ihumātao near Auckland airport drew support from the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in their fight to stop a housing development on their sacred stone fields (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2017). And Ngāti Kahungunu of Hawke's Bay led a protest against a consent issued without their knowledge for a walking track that has scarred the face of their sacred Te Mata o Rongokako range (Treacher 2018).

On a brighter note, we were proud to celebrate the performance of our Black Ferns Women's Rugby team as they won not only the Women's Rugby World Cup in Ireland in August 2017 but also the Rugby World Cup Sevens–Women's Tournament held in San Francisco in July 2018 (Rugby World Cup Women's 2017; Rugby World Cup Sevens 2018). Almost all of the team are either Māori or Pacific Islanders. Likewise, our national softball team, the Black Sox, won their seventh world title in the Men's World Softball Championship in Canada in July 2017. They are one of New Zealand's most successful sporting teams (Smith 2017).

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NIUE

Niue's political scene has been marked by several significant events and activities over the past year. Most notably, Niue Premier Sir Toke Talagi secured a fourth term in government following elections in May 2017, despite coming in third in common roll polls behind former member of Parliament (MP) and Niue High Commissioner to New Zealand O'Love Tauveve Jacobsen and long-serving common roll MP Terry Coe.

The postelection atmosphere quietly echoed the determination of those who were looking for a change in government and working to challenge an administration whose politics were dominated by a generation of

career politicians. Other emerging themes from Sir Toke Talagi's government included reaffirming its position and preferences in regards to its free-association relationship with New Zealand, capacity building and sustainable resource management for the island, an increase in activities related to Niue's international relationships, and questionable amendments to legislation.

In August 2017, the legislative assembly passed a budget deficit of NZ\$1.1million (NZ\$100,000 = US\$65,227) for the fiscal year 2017–2018 (Takelesi 2017). This shortfall in the annual budget was met with great concern and many questioned the government's management of its finances in relation to its ability to achieve its objectives, projects, and election promises. In January 2014, Niue's Public Service was reduced to a four-day workweek, with public servants continuing to be paid for five full working days. However, this scheme does not apply to some public servants, such as teachers. Public servants had sought pay increases for a long time but were instead met with this scheme, with decreased productivity within the public sector often cited as a contributing factor to the deficit in the government's budget (RNZ 2017). This is relatively concerning for a small island nation whose budget is predominantly made up of various sources of revenue from internal fees and tax measures and administrative assistance from New Zealand. Tax increases throughout the 2017–2018 year were also met with mixed reviews, with these increases often cited by critics as being part of a plan to generate more revenue to relieve

the budget deficit. An increase in departure tax from NZ\$34 to NZ\$80 and increases in fuel prices and prices for tobacco products are examples of this (BCN, 4 July 2017). In his budget statement for the 2018–2019 fiscal year, the premier made a statement on working toward delivering a more "fiscally prudent balanced budget" (Office of the Premier of Niue 2018b). However, economic opportunities in Niue for achieving self-sufficiency and development going forward remain stagnant, and we can therefore anticipate the types of controls, adjustments, and changes that will be implemented to achieve the premier's goals.

In October, celebrations in honor of forty-three years of self-government were commemorated locally with foreign dignitaries in attendance. Here, the premier emphasized the changes that Niue had experienced since 1974, and its wishes to work alongside New Zealand going forward, as opposed to the dominant-subservient or donor-recipient relationship that the two have experienced at times (BCN, 24 Oct 2017). The Niue Constitution Act 1974 states that Niue is to be self-governing, with the New Zealand government assisting in the management of its external affairs and defense (Parliamentary Counsel Office 1988a)—a relationship that should entail peaceful and positive cooperation. Over time, the budget support, aid, and development assistance provided by the New Zealand government has resulted in a dominant-subservient type of relationship, and the premier criticized New Zealand officials for their dominant behavior with respect to Niue's internal affairs.

In November 2017, the government was faced with its first vote of no confidence since taking office, as submitted by opposition MP Terry Coe (BCN, 7 Nov 2017). The motion was put forward due to dissatisfaction with the government's management of its finances, as well as the premier's notable absence from assembly meetings as a result of lengthy periods of time spent overseas due to ill health. The premier's absence during the assembly meetings in which the motion was submitted and addressed, along with one other minister who was away overseas, meant that two members assisting ministers (MAMs) were given an acting ministerial role to address the vote. In Niue, each of the four cabinet ministers has an MP whose role is to assist them in their duties. In February 2018, a fourth MAM was sworn in, increasing the number of people in the cabinet to eight (BCN, 5 Feb 2018).

In the Niue Assembly and in accordance with article 6(1)(b) of the Niue Constitution Act 1974, "Any 4 or more members of the Assembly who are not Ministers may give notice of their intention to move a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet" (Parliamentary Counsel Office 1988b). The vote of no confidence was addressed and defeated by a clear majority of twelve votes against four (BCN, 14 Nov 2017). The assembly engaged in lengthy discussions on a variety of topics and, despite the unsuccessful bid, MP Terry Coe highlighted that this vote was a good opportunity and another way for members to get their position across to the government, as well as members of the public.

This identified a relatively grey area

in the Niue Constitution (see article 22 [1]), in which assembly meetings are not held on a regular basis but are to be held once every six weeks, with the Speaker, acting on request of the premier, maintaining authority and the power to call each meeting (Parliamentary Counsel Office 1988c). MPs' opposition to the government's use of the vote of no confidence to engage with the government raises questions on the frequency of assembly meetings and the democratic nature of the management of legislative affairs by the premier and his cabinet. In a small island nation in which the notion of party politics would not be viable, the intricacies of managing government versus opposition politics can be complex and, in this instance, there appears to have been limited engagement with opposition members and perhaps the majority of members who are not directly part of the cabinet. This therefore raises questions regarding the capacity that members in the assembly have in keeping the premier and his cabinet accountable, and what the role and limitations of the constitution are in this.

Following the vote of no confidence, an amendment to the Civil List Act was heavily debated in the assembly prior to being passed. This amendment to the Civil List Act saw increases in clothing allowances for MPs. Payable once inducted, the clothing allowance for the premier has increased from NZ\$800 (2016) to NZ\$5000, for cabinet ministers from NZ\$750 to NZ\$4000, and for remaining MPs, including the speaker, from NZ\$500 to NZ\$4000 (BCN, 3 Oct 2017). Questions were raised on whether it is a conflict of interest

for members to make and pass such changes, as unlike countries such as New Zealand, Niue has no independent body or review board for MPs' salaries and allowances. Pursuant to article 25 of the constitution, the Niue Public Service Commission, which is Niue's employment authority, makes recommendations to the assembly on the remuneration and other entitlements of the premier, ministers, Speaker, and other members (Parliamentary Counsel Office 1988d). As these are merely described as "recommendations," it is not made clear in the constitution, or anywhere, who has the final authority and decision on such matters. This therefore raises further questions on how the entitlements of members of the assembly are measured and determined using various factors, such as members' duties and responsibilities and the appropriate remuneration for those within the public service.

Niue's politics were not without its moments, including one in which it received international media attention following an altercation between a member and a cabinet minister after an assembly meeting. MP Terry Coe alleged that Minister for Ministry of Social Services Billy Talagi assaulted him following a heated debate inside the debating chamber (BCN, 6 Feb 2018). After initially denying these allegations, the minister was discharged without conviction after pleading guilty to assaulting the MP. This is a very rare occurrence within Niue's political scene, but it certainly gained media coverage locally and overseas (RNZ 2018a; *Fiji Sun* 2018).

Following the swearing in of the newly elected coalition government in

New Zealand in October 2017, the Niue premier met with the Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters in early 2018 to reaffirm Niue's bilateral ties and present the Niue government's position on its free association relationship with New Zealand (BCN, 1 March 2018). Discussions included Niue's preference for capital funds over the traditional monetary assistance that New Zealand provides for local infrastructure and investment, as well as avenues for revenue generation for Niue in the long-term to develop economic self-sufficiency and sustainability.

In the same month, the New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's Pacific Reset Tour, with her delegation of over fifty officials and guests, again saw the premier echoing similar lines, reaffirming his wishes for a change in the Niue-New Zealand relationship and to substitute traditional aid for investment (BCN, 6 March 2018). The premier also used this opportunity to express Niue's support for its eligibility for the New Zealand Superannuation and its portability to the realm countries, highlighting how New Zealand citizens living abroad in the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau should be eligible for it and questioning why it is that those in the realm countries are being treated differently. This highlights an area within Niue's constitution and its relationship with New Zealand that warrants further exploration and clarification: To what extent does the free association relationship also extend the benefits enjoyed by citizens living in New Zealand to include those citizens who are living abroad in the realm countries?

The premier later announced Niue's

withdrawal of support for the Social Assistance (Residency Qualification) Legislation Bill, citing that it would encourage young people to leave the island (RNZ 2018b). Given the island's youthful population, the potential passing of this bill will undoubtedly increase long-term pressure on Niue's local services by adding extra pressure to a health system that is already struggling to cope with looking after the island's older population.

As a part of the Pacific Reset Tour, the New Zealand prime minister and her delegation pledged NZ\$750,000 toward improving the island's road and water infrastructure, and a NZ\$5 million boost was injected into a project to help achieve Niue's goal of having 80 percent renewable energy by 2025 (Ardern 2018). This injection of funds from New Zealand will increase the island's capacity to develop solar farms in a bid to become less reliant on fossil fuels. In addition to this, the Niue government received a new electric vehicle, which the premier has been trialing (BCN, 29 May 2018). With the plan being to replace current vehicles used by cabinet ministers and some departments with electric vehicles, Niue has certainly got its eyes set on investing in more environmentally friendly modes of transport, including to roll these vehicles out to residents in the long run (BCN, 29 May 2018). With an estimated cost of NZ\$20,000 per vehicle, this figure remains relatively out of reach for many. Despite still being just a concept—with explorations only into the viability of the government using electric cars—increasing fuel prices on the island may become an incentive for some to invest in more environ-

mentally friendly and cost-effective modes of transport.

While on the tour, Prime Minister Ardern also honored women in Niue, highlighting that the Niue Assembly has the highest number of women MPs in any independent or self-governing country in the Pacific (BCN, 6 March 2018).

Over the past decade, Niue's international relations have grown. This small island has managed to garner support in the form of economic and development assistance from numerous big players. Visits by ambassadors and high commissioners to New Zealand from various countries presenting their credentials occurred quite often throughout the 2017–2018 year. In September 2017, two consulate officials from the US Embassy in New Zealand carried out a scoping visit to Niue (BCN, 17 Sept 2017). With the aim of exploring development opportunities between the two countries, this visit was certainly a display of greater commitment by the United States for increasing its support of and activities within the Pacific region. Although Niue and the United States have no formal diplomatic relations, a courtesy visit by US Ambassador to New Zealand Scott Brown, who was appointed in June 2017 under the Trump administration, further highlighted the United States' renewed interests in working with Pacific countries (BCN, 3 May 2018). The Turkish ambassador to New Zealand also presented his credentials during a courtesy visit (BCN, 24 Oct 2017). Since Turkey established diplomatic ties with New Zealand in 2015, this was a milestone event as it was the first time a Turkish ambassador had visited

Niue. Italy's ambassador to New Zealand also presented his credentials, as did the Australian high commissioner and the Indian high commissioner to New Zealand, further strengthening the bilateral ties. India has provided substantial development assistance to Niue, most notably with the provision of NZ\$1.2 million in funding toward upgrading the island's mobile network from 2G to 4G (BCN, 26 Oct 2017). By the time of publication, the 4G network will have launched. To date, Niue has fifteen diplomatic relationships, including with China, Singapore, India, Australia, Cook Islands, Sāmoa, Thailand, Turkey, Cuba, Papua New Guinea, Kosovo, Japan, Italy, Brazil, and New Zealand, with which it has a constitutional relationship (Niue High Commission 2018).

In December 2017, Niue and the People's Republic of China celebrated ten years of diplomatic relations. A Chinese delegation of twelve visited the island to mark the occasion, with a formal ceremony followed by a large display of fireworks, described as the largest fireworks display ever seen on the island, held as celebrations to mark the milestone (BCN, 13 Dec 2017). Signed under the leadership of former Premier Young Vivian, the current Niue premier reiterated that Niue stands by its endorsement of the "One China" policy and supports ongoing cooperation between the two countries regarding economic and development assistance (BCN, 13 Dec 2017).

An economic and technical cooperation agreement with China was signed with the purpose of upgrading the island's road infrastructure (BCN, 13 Dec 2017). We continue to see bigger players in the international scene

garnering support from smaller island nations such as Niue by providing economic and development assistance in exchange for support of their political agendas. For instance, in exchange for economic assistance, Niue provides India support at international forum election processes and, as mentioned, Niue endorses China's "One China" policy (BCN, 26 Oct 2017). With the United States now looking to increase its assistance to the island, it will be interesting to see how Niue will manage these relationships, competing interests, and the expectations of bigger countries of Niue, and how its relationship with its traditional aid and development partner, New Zealand, will continue going forward. Because support for the island's development has expanded, it has increased Niue's ability to be more critical of the support that it receives from New Zealand.

Niue's application to become a member of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been marked with great progress. In recent months, the premier met with the president of the ADB to discuss the viability and requirements for Niue's membership (Office of the Premier of Niue 2018a). With a total membership of sixty-seven countries, the aim of the ADB is to reduce poverty in the wider Asia Pacific region through "inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration" (BCN, 29 May 2018). In 2017, it was reported that ADB operations totaled just over US\$30 billion, with US\$11.9 billion in financing (BCN, 10 May 2018). The objectives of the organization align with Niue's emphasis on economic and environ-

mentally sustainable growth, although it would be worth exploring just how in-depth regional integration would be carried out, given the economic, developmental, social, and cultural differences among many of the Asian and Pacific Island nations.

Membership with the ADB would expand Niue's avenues for applying for financial support, in addition to working with its traditional development partners. This is the third time that Niue has applied for membership, and it is reported to be very close to meeting the required threshold for becoming a member, including garnering support from various member nations including India, the United States, and Indonesia (Office of the Premier of Niue 2018a). A US\$100,000 membership fee is required to become a member (BCN, 3 May 2018). Consequently, it will be interesting to see just how Niue will make this payment, having to balance this against a budget deficit as well as government objectives to solve infrastructure issues, gain investments for future projects, and achieve other long-term goals.

Support from international agencies and organizations to the island has enabled an array of capacity-building projects focusing on economic and environmental sustainability. For instance, the Global Environment Facility along with the United Nations Development Project provided funding for the Accelerating Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Applications in Niue (AREAN) project (BCN, 15 Feb 2018). This project will spearhead Niue's vision to have 80 percent renewable electricity by 2025 and is set to be implemented in 2019. Niue's

first ever marine compliance strategy was compiled, in which consultations were held regarding the management of Niue's marine resources (BCN, 15 Feb 2018). This strategy will help to put in place plans, rules, and regulations for the use of the island's maritime spaces.

Several other development initiatives were also undertaken, including a mapping exercise of Niue's civil society engagement, in a bid to create a better understanding of local perspectives and the support required for grassroots projects, and so as to be better reflected in regional spaces and forums (BCN, 16 Nov 2017). Here we are seeing greater regional support for development and an increase in Pacific-led capacity building projects, highlighting the strength and commitment of Niue to Pacific regionalism.

A vital observation made during the review period is that the current government appears to be exclusively influenced by a limited number of its members. Whether this is due to limitations of the constitution or the approach undertaken by the government, it will be interesting to see how open and interactive with the population it will become going forward. This calls for the Niue population to be more active in the democratic process, be more aware and demanding of their local representatives, and to not be too complacent when it comes to politics. This observation reflects on the island's political sophistication and the need for encouragement for the population to become more involved in decision-making processes.

This also calls for a review of the Niue Constitution, given that some of Niue's legislations are very old; Niue

has changed and developed significantly over the years since 1974. The language used in the constitution is very important and it is currently quite “loose,” requiring tightening as some articles may be interpreted in a variety of ways, giving room for amendments that may be questionable but not prohibited by the constitution itself.

Overall, this review reflects Niue as a place that is still very much in the developing phases of its political existence, albeit with great potential. The premier’s preference for investments over “aid” is worth noting, as the use of such terms can influence donors’ and recipients’ perspectives on the amount of and attitudes toward support provided to Niue. This places Niue at an advantage over other developing nations, as its small size and relatively untouched nature enables it to carefully build its capacity to cater to its own needs and objectives by observing the experiences of other countries. It is hoped that Niue can manage all of the support it receives and its numerous relationships so as to effectively and efficiently achieve its long-term goals, including becoming more self-sufficient.

SALOTE TALAGI

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PITCAIRN

The islands of Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie, and Oeno (commonly known as Pitcairn) make up a single territory, the last remaining United Kingdom Overseas Territory (UKOT) in the Pacific Ocean. But much of the period under review (1 July 2017–30 June 2018) was concerned with Pitcairn's relationship with the European Union (EU), which has been highly advantageous to the territory. However, a long shadow has been cast over these relations due to the upcoming departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Brexit), which was officially scheduled for 29 March 2019.

Pitcairn is an Overseas Country and Territory (OCT) of the European Union. OCTs are not part of the European Union and thus are not directly subject to EU law, but they do have associate status and thus receive various forms of assistance from Brussels. As a consequence, the limited resources of the Pitcairn Island Council were focused on securing as much EU funding as possible before

Brexit, while also lobbying London to ensure the territory's interests were safeguarded in the longer term.

A crucial meeting for Pitcairn was the European Union Overseas Countries and Territories Ministerial Conference held in Brussels between 20 and 23 February 2018. A range of issues were discussed, including climate change, sustainable energy, and biodiversity, and what EU funding could best support initiatives in these areas (OCTA 2018). The highlight for Pitcairn was the signing of a European Development Fund (EDF)–11 Focal Sector agreement, worth €2.35 million (US\$2.72 million), to upgrade the island's medical center and to support several tourism-related activities, including “improving accessibility to Pitcairn, specifically by developing the Bounty Bay and Tedside landings and improving on-shore facilities” and “constructing a shelter and information centre for tourists and other visitors” (European Commission 2018a). A further €480,000 (US\$556,000) was allocated under the EU's Pacific Regional Funding to cover two-thirds of the preliminary budgeted cost of the introduction of solar-powered renewable energy to Pitcairn (*Pitcairn Miscellany* 2018b).

Because of the frequent time lag in getting EU funds disbursed, Pitcairn also benefitted from some EDF–10 money during the period under review. For example, a number of local road improvement projects were undertaken through the European Union's INTEGRÉ (Territories Initiative for Regional Management of the Environment) program (*Pitcairn Miscellany* 2017a). INTEGRÉ also supported a glass recycling project, whereby

empty glass bottles were recycled into souvenirs for the tourist market (*Pitcairn Miscellany* 2017b). The projects linked into INTEGRE's focus on building resilience and sustainable development in the Pacific OCTs in the face of climate change. In addition, funds from EDF-10 paid for a new goods shed (*Pitcairn Miscellany* 2017a).

The importance of these funds was made clear in July 2017, when Pitcairn Islands Councillor Leslie Jaques gave evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union on the likely impacts of Brexit. He noted that the European Union provides "a significant amount" of funding—accounting for about 30 percent of Pitcairn's overall budget (House of Lords 2017, 6). He also explained the importance of being part of a regional envelope of funding, which helps to facilitate cooperation with French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and New Caledonia. Pitcairn gains benefits in other respects too; the European Union is one of Pitcairn's largest markets for its honey exports, and the free movement of Pitcairners to French Polynesia, and particularly Tahiti, for medical treatment is crucial.

As a consequence, Pitcairn has much to lose from Brexit, and Jaques did not mince words during his time with the House of Lords committee. He said that the loss of EU funding and freedom of movement to other European Union territories would be "catastrophic"; he went on to say that "we trust in the [Brexit] process and we hope for the best" (House of Lords 2017, 19). Jaques also cautioned that "we do not know [who will fill the funding gap], which is a concern" (House of Lords 2017, 6). So far the

UK government has not given any reassurances that it will make good any shortfalls in support. More generally, there is still great uncertainty over what a post-Brexit relationship with the European Union will look like. And so, Pitcairn and the other overseas territories are largely beholden to trusting the UK government to make the best possible deal for them.

The view from the European Commission and the OCTs is rather mixed in terms of whether Pitcairn and the other UK territories will be able to maintain a relationship with them once the United Kingdom has withdrawn from the European Union. In its political declaration after the European Union Overseas Countries and Territories Ministerial Conference in February 2018, OCT representatives recommended that the European Union "explore how [the UK] OCTs can continue to benefit from preferential trade arrangements post Brexit" (OCTA 2018, 3). They also suggested that the United Kingdom could "contribute to the EU financial support earmarked for OCTs . . . with a view to maintain UKOTs within or alongside the OCTs grouping" (OCTA 2018, 9). Overseas Countries and Territories Association (OCTA) Chair and French Polynesia Vice President Teva Rohfritsch stated, "We will not turn our backs on our friends from Pitcairn Island because of Brexit. Regional co-operation will continue" (*Pitcairn Miscellany* 2018b).

The European Commission was more noncommittal, and in June 2018 published a draft for a new "Council Decision on the Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories with the European Union," which

specifically excludes the UK territories: “The proposed Decision will take into account the consequences of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the fact that the special regime set out in Part Four of the TFEU [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union] would no longer apply to the 12 British OCTs” (European Commission 2018b, 9). So there are real concerns that, when (and if) a final Brexit deal is agreed to, the interests of Pitcairn and the other territories will be sidelined.

With the potential loss of support from the European Union, debate over Pitcairn’s long-term viability was placed into even sharper focus. The population remains at a near historically low level—in the mid-forties—and it continues to age. Only seven people in paid employment are under the age of 50, and there are none in the 20–30 age group (UN 2018, 7). The new UK governor of Pitcairn, Laura Clarke, who assumed her post in January 2018, said the issue of the island’s future was “an existential question with no quick or easy answers” (*Pitcairn Miscellany* 2018c).

In an attempt to move this debate forward, several workshops on Pitcairn’s future were held during the period under review, although there were concerns that the younger members of the community did not engage (PIC 2018a, 2). Discussions included whether Pitcairners’ attitude toward migrants needed to improve; who should Pitcairn be targeting as prospective migrants; and whether a more realistic marketing campaign—one which also highlighted the difficulties of migrating to the territory—was

needed. But there was also consideration of whether a survey should be undertaken to see if current residents wanted to leave Pitcairn and what support they might require to resettle elsewhere (PIC 2018c, 2; 2018d, 3). Nevertheless, there was frustration over the lack of concrete measures to start addressing Pitcairn’s perilous future. One Islander remarked “that we had spoken repeatedly on the same issues but nothing had happened to take things forward” (PIC 2018d, 3).

Despite heightened concerns over the future of Pitcairn, several new initiatives were taken in an attempt to boost its economic viability. Perhaps the most significant was the plan to designate Pitcairn as a Dark Sky Sanctuary. To date only four locations in the world—Aotea/Great Barrier Island (New Zealand); Cosmic Campground (United States); Gabriela Mistral (Chile); and Rainbow Bridge National Monument (United States)—have this status. A Dark Sky Sanctuary is “public or private land that has an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is protected for its scientific, natural, or educational value, its cultural heritage and/or public enjoyment” (International Dark-Sky Association 2018). Pitcairn looked to the Aotea/Great Barrier Island in particular, which, after becoming a dark sky reserve in 2012, saw a significant growth in so-called astro-tourism. In February 2018, John Hearnshaw, emeritus astronomy professor from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, visited Pitcairn and indicated that the island met the criteria, and it was expected that an application would be made to the International

Dark-Sky Association later in the year (*Pitcairn Miscellany* 2018a).

However, the issue of Pitcairn's inaccessibility, which would need addressing if "astro-tourism" was to become viable, was starkly highlighted when it was noted that in the six months prior to November 2017, there were no cruise ship arrivals, and even when *Le Boreal* did arrive the sea conditions were too rough to land the passengers (*Pitcairn Miscellany* 2017c). As a result of these and other constraints, including the continued failure of the campaign to bring new (and younger) residents to Pitcairn, UK budgetary support—worth £3.1 million (US\$4 million) in fiscal year 2018–19—remained crucial (DFID 2018). This support was criticized by the *Daily Mail*, a widely read, right-wing newspaper and long-term critic of the UK aid budget. An article by the paper's deputy political editor, headlined "The paradise island that can't persuade ANYONE to move there: UK gives Pitcairn £6.5m aid after drive to boost population fails," mocked the failure of the recruitment campaign and quoted official documents from the Department of International Development (DFID), stating that the aid was needed because the "able bodied population has declined to a critical level," and that "the likelihood of a significant increase in population is low and the prognosis is very pessimistic" (Stevens 2018).

Another reason why it has proved so difficult to attract new residents is highlighted by the continuing effort to overcome Pitcairn's legacy of past and more recent cases of child sexual abuse. A series of child safety meetings took place in August and early Sep-

tember 2017, and according to the UK government these enabled a successful reconciliation process to take place (UN 2018, 8). Then in November 2017, two child safety reviewers contracted by the United Kingdom visited Pitcairn "to undertake an independent review of [its child safety] systems and processes and overall culture of the island" (PIC 2017b, 1). Pitcairn was still struggling to offer some form of public recognition of what had taken place. Also, one problem of managing the process of rehabilitation was highlighted when Pitcairn's Internet connectivity was closed to other users in order to allow a recently released offender to hold Skype meetings with his psychologist (PIC 2017a, 5).

Reports that Henderson Island had the highest density of man-made debris recorded anywhere in the world, weighing a combined total of 17.6 tonnes, elicited a response from Governor Clarke. Researchers from the University of Tasmania and the United Kingdom's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds made the discovery and suggested that about 13,000 new items were washed up daily (*The Guardian* 2017). Governor Clarke highlighted the problem in her blog and announced that the Pew Charitable Trusts, with support from the Blue Belt Programme (a UK government initiative to help provide long-term protection for the marine environment) would send an expedition to Henderson to undertake a forensic analysis of the plastics to identify the sources of the litter and track the extent of the impact. There were also plans to clear a section of the beach, convert the plastic into a substitute for aggregate in concrete,

and add it into pathways and tourist trails on Pitcairn (FCO 2018). The expedition was initially planned for the latter half of 2018, but it was pushed back to early 2019 (PIC 2018b, 4).

Elections for the local council took place on 8 November 2017. The position of deputy mayor was uncontested, so Charlene Warren-Peu retained her position. The five councillors elected were Michele Christian, Darralyn Griffiths, Leslie Jaques, Sue O'Keefe, and Kevin Young (*Pitcairn Miscellany* 2017d).

So the year under review was one of uncertainty and continued vulnerability, particularly in relation to what will happen with Brexit. It is possible that the UK government will agree to a “softer” version, which would mean maintaining a relatively strong alignment with the European Union. And the closer the United Kingdom remains to the European Union, the better the outcome for Pitcairn. But there is no certainty of that and, as Councillor Jaques warned, the impact of Brexit could be “catastrophic” if there is a significant breach. This threat comes at a time when Pitcairn (along with the UK government) remains unable to mitigate in any real way the (long-standing) “existential” problems facing the territory. The Dark Sky Sanctuary initiative is certainly an interesting one, but without a comprehensive, viable, and sustainable plan for Pitcairn, the future is looking increasingly bleak. The waste-management crisis on neighboring Henderson is perhaps indicative of this malaise: that the islands are too remote and the funding too small to maintain a viable and

effective “British” presence on the islands.

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RAPA NUI

Rapa Nui political events, issues, legislation, and social movements from 2017–2018 articulated across a complex spectrum of local, national, regional, and global scales that transected terrestrial as well as oceanic and discursive fields. Disputes over control of Rapa Nui cultural heritage, sacred places, and the ocean that occurred during the prior review period remained focal. *Ley de Residencia*—the law for controlling Chilean and international migration to Rapa Nui, which was approved by Chile’s national legislature at the close of review last year—was officially implemented in 2018 with the general support of Rapa Nui leadership. As the review year concluded, movement to change the official name for the island continued to gain support; however, the election of a new Chilean president forebodes a future that could radically differ from the broadly progressive present that Rapa Nui realized under the left-of-center administration led by President Michelle Bachelet.

Some of the breadth of island politics were visible during a visit to the island in September 2017, where I participated in a locally organized international seminar entitled “*Dialogues Sobre Derechos Humanos Desde La Perspectiva Del Pueblo Mā’ori Rapa Nui*” (Dialogues on Human Rights from the perspective of the Mā’ori Rapa Nui people), held at the Tojariiki Cultural Center in Hanga Roa. The seminar included approximately thirty speakers and was organized by the Rapa Nui–determined organization Honui (an assembly of “family clan” (*hua’ai*)

leaders), the Council of Elders, and the Parlamento Rapa Nui along with the support of the Municipality of Easter Island and the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) (Sandoval 2017). Speakers included representatives of Indigenous peoples of the Basque territory of Europe, Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Tahiti; scholars with expertise on self-determination in Cook Islands, globalization, and Indigenous rights in Mexico; Rapa Nui representatives; attorneys for Rapa Nui people in state and international arenas; and anthropologists of Rapa Nui, including myself and Grant McCall.

The seminar participants’ peaceful dialogue was contrasted by the signs encircling the cultural center, which traced an island world entangled in a “battle order” (Foucault 1980, 16). Outside, the offices of the governor were covered in banners and flags coded in Spanish, Rapa Nui, and English that condemned the Chilean government as an “*usapador*” (usurper) conducting “*consultas ilegales*” (illegal consultations). Signs also demanded that “their own people” and not the “Government of Chile decide for us.” Up the road, large banners and black flags denigrated the front gate of the five-star hotel Hangaroa Eco-Village and Spa with slogans like “*Hanga Roba Hotel Pirata*” coupled with graphic images of guns paired with skull and crossbones and statements that the hotel was “built on stolen land.” Inside the seminar venue, Nancy Yáñez, the leading attorney for Honui and a descendant of the Indigenous Mapuche people of Chile, emphasized that

self-determination for Rapa Nui was supported by the “founding principles of the United Nations,” which require all member state governments to provide “tools for people to freely define their political status” (Sandoval 2017). Attorney Ciro Colombara—who is currently representing Parlamento Rapa Nui and the Council of Elders in an ongoing legal case filed against the Chilean state in 2015 at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) within the Organization of American States (*Economía y Negocios*, 15 Nov 2015)—advised the Rapa Nui people that “the outcome of the lawsuit” will be fundamental to the “path” that they should organize for self-determination in the coming years (Sandoval 2017). An outcome statement of the seminar asserted that Rapa Nui people consider any “state title” or “concession” regulating their ancestral territory as an unacceptable “limitation of the territorial rights of the Rapa Nui people,” and that they aspire to “have full ownership rights over their lands and territories” based on “ancestral occupation” that is “regulated by customary law.” The outcome statement and the voices of participants from within the seminar, as well as the symbolic banners outside, constitute useful regimes of “veridiction and jurisdiction” for assessing the indigenous politics of the review period (Foucault 1991, 79); that is, what should politically be known (veridiction) and done (jurisdiction) in the island world.

Following the seminar in September, global media attention to the Rapa Nui case at the IACHR was notably linked to the Catalunya independence movement from Spain

(Anarte 2017). Yet as the review period closes, there are no new reports regarding the case since the registering of testimony by Matías Riroroko, given during a commission hearing in March 2017 that denounced historical and contemporary “use of violence and police repression” by Chile (Organization of American States 2017). Erity Teave, vice president of Parlamento Rapa Nui, emphasized that the case regards the restoration of the rights of Rapa Nui people to “the collective property of its territory,” which the state of Chile undermined as it colonized the island beginning in the late nineteenth century, doing so in violation of the 1888 bilateral treaty known as the “Agreement of Wills” (*Acuerdo de Voluntades*) signed by Rapa Nui and Chilean representatives (*El Ciudadano*, 25 Sept 2017). José Rapu, an elected commissioner of the Island Development Commission (CODEIPA), saw the state delays with the IACHR as reflective of a history of state “paternalism and colonialism” that fails to build the capacity of the Rapa Nui people “to develop” on their own terms and to truly solve “the problems of the island” (Bertin 2017). While the state assured the commission of its “willingness to engage in dialogue” (Organization of American States 2017), Chile was noted as not responding within the period requested by the court (Vallejos 2017). Irrespective of the delays, attorney Colombara insisted he had “no doubt about the legal soundness of the case” and its consistency with the history of “the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights” that has “recognized the collective property rights of indigenous

peoples over their territories” (Bertin 2017).

As the seminar concluded on 9 September 2017, a date that marked the anniversary of the 1888 initiation of Chilean colonization in Rapa Nui, the Chilean state announced the official designation of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) of multiple uses around Rapa Nui. Pew Charitable Trusts commended the declaration and highlighted its own role in the “education and training” that helped to facilitate the process (Pew Charitable Trusts 2017). The declaration followed a series of public consultations that began in July (Gobernación Isla de Pascua, 13 July 2017), continuing until a vote on 28–29 August that was later tabulated as resulting in a 62 percent approval of coadministration of the MPA (Gobernación Isla de Pascua, 4 Sept 2017). Coadministration is supposed to include elected representatives of the Rapa Nui people within CODEIPA and of island fishing organizations; both had previously been excluded in the 2015 presidential proposal for the MPA and consequently denounced the proposal, as well as its coordination with Pew, as colonial (Young 2018, 198–202).

Though a positive step for Rapa Nui working within Chilean regimes of veridiction and jurisdiction in comparison to the 2015 proposal, island communication within and outside of the September 2017 seminar resonated significant public dissonance regarding the declaration. Next to the aforementioned banners surrounding the governor’s office, signs also declared “Pew—Go Home!” and commanded “No Parque Marino! Haka rē te vaikava o te Rapa Nui!” (No Marine

Park! Leave the ocean of the Rapa Nui people alone!). Inside the seminar, a leading elder fisherman gave a speech contesting the July and August consultations, stressing that the final plebiscite amounted to a set of “papers” (parau) “for taking” (me’e toke) “the ocean” (te vaikava) of the Rapa Nui people. His critique accorded with an 18 July letter to President Bachelet signed by the leading representatives of Honui, a copy of which I obtained as a seminar participant. The letter characterized the entire consultation processes as not only “illegal”—given that it did not work within international frameworks of self-determination—but also as a tool of “assimilation” and potential “genocide.” The local environmental nongovernmental organization Kakaka Ecological Here Henu’a Mā’ori Rapa Nui and the women’s group Movimiento Komari also registered public criticism of the designation. They historically contextualized it as extending state “violation” of the 1888 Agreement of Wills, which they anticipate will be “detrimental to current and future generations.” They think that the purported goal of the MPA to help conserve world diversity is a “false premise” that conceals its entanglement in the production of benefits for “external systems alien to our ancestral culture” (El Ciudadano, 31 Aug 2017).

Rapa Nui alarm is substantiated by a diversity of global concerns with MPAs. Though MPAs worldwide are promoted in mass media as tools of ocean conservation, they are ultimately embedded in the goliath World Bank project of a “blue economy” that values the ocean in the trillions of US dollars (World Bank 2018).

This regime of capital accumulation monetizes the ocean for aquaculture, blue-carbon trading, industrial fisheries, and seabed mining (Campbell and others 2016, 518–528), which local and indigenous peoples worldwide have experienced as a form of “ocean grabbing” that jeopardizes their livelihood (Pedersen and others 2014). As a regime of marine governance that helps standardize their access to and control over “blue resources” (Barbasaard 2018, 145), “powerful actors” like rent-seeking state officials, large-scale international conservation organizations, big tourist companies, and state treasuries promote MPA-style conservation (Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012, 337); however, the “scientific basis” underlying MPAs is questioned (Campbell and others 2016, 535–536), and the overall capacity of blue economy projects to restore and sustain “ocean health” is unknown (Barbasaard 2018, 145).

Chilean interest in increased regulation of the ocean may thus be read in accord with its broader history of neoliberal environmental agendas. While green policies often emerged in states in the 1960s and 1970s in response to internal social organization of citizens motivated by a “concern for health and ecological conditions,” in Chile such policies were formed by external concerns with “trade and investment,” especially in relation to satisfying the conditions of participation in global trade associations, like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Tecklin, Bauer, and Prieto 2011, 884–886). Chile has implemented neoliberal environmental policies throughout the south of the state that dispossess Indigenous Mapuche

people while selling and leasing territory to “green grabbing” billionaires privatizing nature for a variety of interests (Holmes 2014). Amid announced proposals of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) megaprojects like an underwater fiber-optic cable linking China and Chile through the ocean of Rapa Nui (Young 2018, 201), the MPA could indeed be an oceanic extension of Chile’s neoliberal “market-enabling” policies for the environment (Tecklin, Bauer, and Prieto 2011, 882–884). Development projects have been known to be implemented for their “side-effects” (Ferguson with Lohman 2016, 192–193). Since Chile implemented environmental policy on the continent in the context of NAFTA, and as China has intensified its political economic investments in Oceania (Wesley-Smith 2013), the MPA could ultimately prove to be less about the conservation of marine life and more about establishing the environmental conditions that would enable Chile to catch big Chinese fish in the World Bank sea of blue economic growth. Indigenous politics of Chinese capital in Cook Islands (Webb 2016, 54–55) and Chile (Aylwin, Silva, and Vargas 2018, 220) continue to be on the horizon for Rapa Nui. Although the MPA designation would be seemingly designed to protect the island from megaprojects, as the review period ended, public discussion of the fiber-optic cable development continued with state authorities.

On 23 November 2017, President Bachelet signed a decree on the halloed grounds of Ahu Tojariki, establishing full indigenous administration of the Chilean National Park (Rapa Nui National Park) on the island. The

change marks the end of a colonial state policy that began in 1935 that territorialized Rapa Nui “sacred places” (vahi tapu) and “ancestral valuables” (hauha’a tupuna) within the park—a policy created without the consultation of the Indigenous people (Teave and Cloud 2014, 410). Full administration emerged after two years of struggle against mandated coadministration implemented through state force (Young 2017), which followed indigenous reclamation of the territory and heritage in March 2015 led by Parlamento Rapa Nui (Young 2016a). Full administration is based on a fifty-year “concession” of state management to the indigenous community organization known as Ma’u Henua (Gobernación de Isla de Pascua, 23 Nov 2017). While the concession is conceived as an important step toward self-determination by Rapa Nui people generally, like the MPA, it was opposed by key leaders and indigenous institutions. Honui representatives protested the concession in letters to UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz as well as the IACHR. Concession is seen in the letters to undermine Rapa Nui claims to “territorial rights” that would reestablish the collective indigenous “ownership” of the land (El Ciudadano, 18 Nov 2017). In August 2018 interviews, Erity Teave described the concession as a “slap in the face,” reflecting a history of state strategy of attempting to avoid comprehensive conflict resolution with Rapa Nui by offering them “huja huja” (crumbs). Island Mayor Petero Edmunds also contested the concession and refused to participate in the

Tonjariki ceremony (El Ciudadano, 18 Nov 2017). While appreciative of progression from coadministration to full, Rapa Nui denouncing the concession contest the legitimacy of the state authority to cede land to Rapa Nui in terms similar to the ways families have disputed state authority to grant “titulo dominio” (land titles) to island territory. Rapa Nui leaders have long maintained that the state cannot coherently give titles to territory because they deny the state has any titles to give. Many Rapa Nui people conceive their entitlement to land as not constituted “from the Chilean government” but through “genealogy traced to Hotu Matu’a,” the founding Rapa Nui chief of the island (Young 2016c, 140).

The politics of Rapa Nui control of hauha’a tupuna were not limited to the island itself during the year under review. On 27 January 2018, New Zealand’s Canterbury Museum, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and the Otago Museum returned “ancestral bones” (ivi tupuna) to the Rapa Nui people—the first international repatriation to Rapa Nui in history (El Programa de Repatriación Rapa Nui, 1 Feb 2018). The repatriation included two skulls and was organized by El Programa de Repatriación Rapa Nui: Ka Haka Hoki Mai Te Mana Tupuna, a grassroots organization created by Indigenous leader Piru Huke Atan and fellow Rapa Nui cultural leaders in 2013 with leading coordination by Jacinta Arthur and Mario Tuki. El Programa de Repatriación Rapa Nui is the first repatriation program created in Chile and has received recognition from the National Monu-

ments Council (Arthur 2019). The *ivi tupuna* were returned following a departure ceremony at the ceremonial Marae Tuahiwi, followed by a welcoming ceremony at the Mataverí International Airport in Rapa Nui; they are to be held temporarily at the Father Sebastian Englert Anthropological Museum until community dialogue with the state establishes a protocol for their final reburial. Piru Huke emphasized that she and her fellow “children of Hotu Matu‘a” are “deeply grateful” to the Māori “for returning their *tupuna*” to their land (El Programa de Repatriación Rapa Nui, 1 Feb 2018). The process of repatriation was a political struggle. Despite initial recognition of El Programa de Repatriación Rapa Nui, the Chilean National Monuments Council opposed many of their efforts in terms of an agenda of “neoliberal multiculturalism” that manages cultural and biological heritage as state patrimony valued for scientific study rather than “ontological restoration” of indigenous peoples (Arthur 2019).

Ley de Residencia was implemented 1 August 2018, following its March 2018 publication in the state government gazette as Ley 21,070 (Gobernación Isla de Pascua, 23 March 2018). The official purpose of the law is to “regulate the exercise of the rights to reside, stay and move to and from the special territory of Easter Island” (Colegio Abogados 2018). According to article 5, “Any person, Chilean or foreign, who enters Easter Island, may remain in the special territory for a maximum period of thirty days”; qualifications of residency terms are detailed further in the context of sixty-two articles, but the key

change is that prior to this law a Chilean national could continue to stay in Rapa Nui beyond a visit for tourism (Colegio Abogados 2018). The CODEIPA commissioners of Rapa Nui publicly voiced general approval of the law, though Commissioner Zoilo Huke acknowledged “it is not perfect,” and Commissioner José Rapu noted that it did not achieve “what we aspired to in its entirety.” Commissioner Poki Tane Haoa highlighted it as promoting the “common good,” and Commissioner Anakena Manutomatoma described it as establishing an important step for “ordering” and “caring” for our territory “sustainably.” In a context where uncontrolled migration was perceived as resulting in problems with managing energy, pollution, waste, and water as well as loss of “respect for traditions,” Commissioner Irene Haoa considered the law a valuable “tool of protection” that could help Rapa Nui “return to live with *umaja*” (Gobernación Isla de Pascua, 23 March 2018); that is, a way of life of solidarity. Parlamento Rapa Nui Vice-President Erity Teave, in interviews with me, also supported the law; she hoped, however, that some of the content of the first articles would be refined and become more restrictive. In the current version, a settler with a residency on the island can authorize island migration of their extended family; many Rapa Nui would like that to be limited to nuclear family only.

As the review period came to a close, changes in Chilean national politics suggested that some of the political progress achieved by Rapa Nui under President Bachelet, irrespective of its limitations, could come to

a screeching halt. Sebastian Piñera, “Chile’s Donald Trump” (Arostegui 2018), was reelected president of Chile under the right-wing Renovación Nacional party during November and December 2017, officially replacing President Bachelet on 11 March 2018. On assuming office, he activated a cabinet that included officials historically supportive of infamous dictator Pinochet as well as the Colonia Dignidad organization of German Chileans used by Pinochet to torture and murder opponents of his regime (*The Guardian*, 23 Jan 2018). Leviante Araki, president of Parlamento Rapa Nui, encouraged “all Chileans” to not vote for Piñera (Biobio, 27 June 2017). He denounced the candidacy of Piñera in terms of his prior record of human rights violations against Indigenous peoples of Chile generally, and particularly in Rapa Nui where Piñera is held responsible for the violence that state special forces known as “Gope” inflicted upon Rapa Nui during the 2010 political conflicts (CNN Chile, 27 June 2017). State brutality led to the successful granting of precautionary measures against Chile at the IACHR, investigations by the United Nations, condemnations on the US Congressional floor, and detailed articulations of state violation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the IWGIA (Young 2016b, 264–266). Piñera’s initial actions against Indigenous peoples during his second presidency suggest his new administration is capable of imposing further oppression of the Rapa Nui island world. In June, he announced the expansion of his Gope team of special forces,

now empowered by new weapons and “armored vehicles,” trained to fight “terrorism” by military forces “of the United States and Colombia” that the state intends to use to combat the Indigenous Mapuche people of Southern Chile (*Santiago Times*, 29 June 2018). Disturbingly, these actions follow increased use of the State Terrorist Act to criminalize Indigenous peoples of Chile in 2017 (Aylwin, Silva, and Vargas 2018), an act that originated under Pinochet to criminalize leftist opposition (Richards 2013, 103) and began to be applied to Indigenous peoples in Chile during the 1990s under the administration of Patricio Aylwin in conflicts with Mapuche (Carruthers and Rodríguez 2009, 749). Today, it is criticized as violating international “due process guarantees” (Amnesty International 2018) and broadening the scope of terrorism so as to criminalize cases of indigenous land and property conflict beyond standard definitions of the term (Richards 2010, 73–76). Mapuche incarcerated by the act identify themselves as “political prisoners” (Carruthers and Rodríguez 2009, 749). In 2017, experts to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) “urged” Chile to stop prosecuting its indigenous peoples under antiterrorism legislation (OHCHR 2017), which consequently came under official review by the United Nations Committee Against Torture the following year (El Mostrador, 14 Aug 2018).

From 2017–2018, as in the representation of the 2010–2011 indigenous political occupations and consequent state violence, there are competing discourses for “placing”

the Rapa Nui world and ascribing meaning to the “various things, people, histories, and events” (Young 2012, 2–3). Within the discourse of Chilean law, this year Rapa Nui people significantly destabilized forces and institutions that have long marginalized and manipulated their subject position in favor of networks of tourist, state, and scientific actors. In addition to strengthening control over their cultural heritage and demography, as well as marine and terrestrial resources, as the period concluded Rapa Nui appear to be gaining control of the nomenclature that has defined them in terms of “history beginning with the arrival of Europeans” (Hau‘ofa 2008, 62). Camilo Rapu, president of Ma‘u Henua, lauded the progress of the state parliamentary processes initiating a formal change of the island name from “Easter Island” (Isla de Pascua) to Rapa Nui. For Rapu, the toponym “Easter Island” is the “inheritance of the slaveholder” world of colonial history (Adprensa, 8 July 2018). Rapu, like many others, hoped to empower instead the name “Rapa Nui”—one that honors their “cultural heritage” and authority to name themselves (Adprensa, 8 July 2018). While remaining entangled in a concession, MPA, and migration laws that foreclose a comprehensive form of self-determination—which Rapa Nui continue to pursue through the IACHR and United Nations—it would be mistaken to think that Rapa Nui regimes of veridiction and jurisdiction have failed to progress. Significant discursive, legal, oceanic, and terrestrial steps that have started to close the settler colonial world of “Easter Island” are opening Rapa Nui

upon alternative paths of indigenous creation.

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